

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-11 are currently pending in the subject application. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of applicants' claim for priority under 35 C.F.R. §1.119, and receipt of a certified copy of the priority document in a related application.

Claims 1-11 are presented to the Examiner for further prosecution on the merits.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 5,825,607 to Burkhart ("the Burkhart reference").

This rejection is respectfully traversed, as the Burkhart reference fails to teach each and every limitation of the invention as claimed. For example, claim 1 claims, in part:

a plurality of sliding pockets sunken into the supporting surface of the chuck; and

a plurality of sliding pads respectively floating-coupled in the sliding pockets such that the sliding pads are spaced apart from the supporting surface in order to provide adaptive support to the object to be fabricated to compensate for the object's expansion and contraction.

The Burkhart reference, however, teaches stationary insulating pads 113 formed in or on a ceramic chuck 108, on which are formed stationary mask support members 112. The Burkhart reference does not teach or suggest a plurality of sliding pockets or a plurality of sliding pads respectively floating-coupled in the sliding pockets as claimed in claim 1 of the subject application. Therefore, claim 1 is believed to be patentably distinguished over the cited prior art reference and in condition for allowance.

In rejecting claim 2, the Examiner refers to the Burkhart reference at col. 5, line 61 – col. 6, line 4, for allegedly disclosing:

each of the sliding pockets 218 includes a magnetic pocket body having an internal space that confines a part of the sliding pad 112, and a magnetic base cover 118 spaced apart from a lower part of the sliding pad 112.

*Office Action of August 21, 2003, at p 2.*

However, reference numeral 118 is used in the Burkhart reference at col. 4, lines 36-41, to refer to “deposits 118” of insulating material 113 “onto the ceramic chuck,” and represents no actual physical structure. The Burkhart reference includes no teaching or suggestion of the “deposits” 118 being magnetic, and does not teach or suggest the use of a magnetic base cover. Also, the “sliding” pockets 218 are defined in the Burkhart reference at col. 4, lines 59-62, as “indentations 218,” which are completely filled with the insulating material 113 so that the insulating material is flush with the support surface of the chuck body, as taught at col. 5, lines 8-10 and 13-15. Further, the pad 112 is formed on the insulating material and is not enclosed in any part of the indentation 218, as the indentation 218 is completely filled with the insulating material 113, as illustrated in FIG. 2 of the Burkhart reference. Finally, as previously stated, the pad 112 is not a “sliding pad” as in the subject application, but rather is fixed to the insulating material 113. Therefore, claim 2 is believed to be patentably distinguished over the Burkhart reference and in condition for allowance.

In rejecting claim 3, the Examiner asserts:

Regarding claim 3, Burkhart (col. 5 lines 61-col. 6 line 4) discloses that the sliding pad 112 includes a sliding body with parts having a magnetic polarity identical to the magnetic polarity of corresponding parts of the pocket body 218 and base cover 118, and a supporting member 113 installed at a part of an upper surface of the sliding body (top of 112). See figure 2.

*Office Action of August 21, 2003, at pp 2-3.*

However, col. 5, line 61 – col. 6, line 4, of the Burkhart reference teach that the ceramic chuck becomes semiconducting at a temperature above 300 °C, so that free charges within the ceramic body migrate to the surface thereof and charges migrate through the wafer 116 according to the Johnson-Rahbek effect, causing the attractive clamping force of the electrostatic chuck. Nowhere does the Burkhart reference teach or suggest a plurality of sliding pockets sunken into the supporting surface of a chuck and a plurality of sliding pads respectively floating-coupled in the sliding pockets, as claimed in claim 1 of the subject application.

Further, the “supporting member 113” is formed of an insulating material either on deposition positions 118 of the ceramic chuck or in indentations 218 formed in the ceramic chuck. The “deposits” 118 and the “indentations” 218 are not used in conjunction and have no actual physical structure. The indentations 218 are completely filled with the insulating material 113, and therefore have no magnetic polarity. Finally, the pads 112 are formed on top of the insulating material 113. The Burkhart reference neither teaches nor suggests a sliding pad including a sliding body with parts having a magnetic polarity identical to the magnetic polarity of corresponding parts of the pocket body and base cover to allow the sliding pad to move freely in the internal space of the pocket body with no contact to the sliding pocket, and a supporting member installed at a part of an upper surface of the sliding body, as claimed in claim 3 of the subject application. Therefore, claim 3 is believed to be patentably distinguished over the Burkhart reference and in condition for allowance.

Remaining claims, claims 4-11, which depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, are believed to be allowable as depending from an allowable base claim.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in this application are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-11 are in condition for allowance, and a notice to such effect is respectfully requested.


If the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to expedite resolution of any outstanding issues.

Reconsideration of this application is earnestly solicited, and an early and favorable further action upon all the claims is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: November 20, 2003



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